

D. Comprehensive Trails and Travel Management

Land Use Plan Decisions. Delineate travel management areas and designate off-highway vehicle management areas.

1. *Delineating Travel Management Areas.* Comprehensive travel management planning should address all resource use aspects (such as recreational, traditional, casual, agricultural, commercial, and educational) and accompanying modes and conditions of travel on the public lands, not just motorized or off-highway vehicle activities. In the RMP, travel management areas (polygons) should be delineated. Identify acceptable modes of access and travel for each travel management area (including over-land, overwater, over-snow and fly-in access [remote airstrips and float planes]). In developing these areas, consider the following:

- a. Consistency with all resource program goals and objectives;
- b. primary travelers;
- c. objectives for allowing travel in the area;
- d. setting characteristics that are to be maintained (including recreation opportunity system and VRM settings); and
- e. primary means of travel allowed to accomplish the objectives and to maintain the setting characteristics.

2. *Designation of Off-Highway Vehicle Management Areas.* All public lands are required to have off-highway vehicle area designations (see 43 CFR 8342.1). Areas must be classified as *open*, *limited*, or *closed* to motorized travel activities. Criteria for open, limited, and closed area designations are established in 43 CFR 8340.0-5(f), (g) and (h), respectively.

For areas classified as limited consider a full range of possibilities, including travel that will be limited to types or modes of travel, such as foot, equestrian, bicycle, motorized, etc.; limited to existing roads and trails; limited to time or season of use; limited to certain types of vehicles (OHVs, motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, high clearance, etc.); limited to licensed or permitted vehicles or users; limited to BLM administrative use only; or other types of limitations. In addition, provide specific guidance about the process for managing motorized vehicle access for authorized, permitted, or otherwise approved vehicles for those specific categories of motorized vehicle uses that are exempt from a limited designation (see 43 CFR 8340.0-5(a)(1-5).

At a minimum, the travel management area designation for wilderness study areas (WSAs) must be limited to ways and trails existing at the time the area became a WSA. *Open* areas within WSAs are appropriate only for sand dune or snow areas designated as such prior to October 21, 1976. Existing roads, ways and trails must be fully documented and mapped. This applies to both motorized and mechanized transport (see Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review H-8550-1(I).(B).(11) for mechanized transport). In addition, future designations may be made for a WSA if it is released from study.

Except as otherwise provided by law (e.g., the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act), congressionally designated wilderness areas are statutorily closed to motorized and mechanized use. These areas should be shown in the land use plans along with the acreage affected.

Existing laws, proclamations, regulations or Executive orders may limit the use of the open area designation or impose additional requirements relating to travel management in specific circumstances.

For RMP provisions related to national scenic, historic and national recreation trails, national back country byways, or other byway designations (see Appendix C, III. Special Designations).

Implementation Decisions. Complete a defined travel management network (system of areas, roads and/or trails) during the development of the land use plan, to the extent practical. If it is not practical to define or delineate the travel management network during the land use planning process, a preliminary network must be identified and a process established to select a final travel management network. Possible reasons for not completing the final network might be size or complexity of the area, controversy, incomplete data, or other constraints. If the final travel management network is to be deferred in the RMP, then the RMP should document the decision-making process used to develop the initial network, provide the basis for future management decisions, and help set guidelines for making road and trail network adjustments throughout the life of the plan. The identification of the uncompleted travel management networks should be delineated in the land use plan and the following tasks completed for each area:

- 1) Produce a map of a preliminary road and trail network;
- 2) define short-term management guidance for road and trail access and activities in areas or sub-areas not completed;
- 3) outline additional data needs, and a strategy to collect needed information;
- 4) provide a clear planning sequence, including public collaboration, criteria and constraints for subsequent road and trail selection and identification;
- 5) provide a schedule to complete the area or sub-area road and trail selection process;
and
- 6) identify any easements and rights-of-ways (to be issued to the BLM or others) needed to maintain the preliminary or existing road and trail network.

If the decision on delineating travel management networks is deferred in the land use plan to the implementation phase, the work normally should be completed within 5 years of the signing of the ROD for the RMP.

At the implementation phase of the plan, establish a process to identify specific areas, roads and/or trails that will be available for public use, and specify limitations placed on use. Products from this process will include:

- 1) A map of roads and trails for all travel modes.
- 2) Definitions and additional limitations for specific roads and trails (defined in 43 CFR 8340.0-5(g)).
- 3) Criteria to select or reject specific roads and trails in the final travel management network, add new roads or trails and to specify limitations.
- 4) Guidelines for management, monitoring, and maintenance of the system.
- 5) Indicators to guide future plan maintenance, amendments, or revisions related to travel management network.
- 6) Needed easements and rights-of-ways (to be issued to the BLM or others) to maintain the existing road and trail network providing public land access.

In addition, travel management networks should be reviewed periodically to ensure that current resource and travel management objectives are being met (see 43 CFR 8342.3).